

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 3-12, 14-25, and 27-33 have been resubmitted. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended. Claim 2 has been canceled. No new claims have been added.

Claims 1 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Cutting (U.S. Patent Number 3,601,459). Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious based on Cutting. Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious based on Cutting in view of Stoll (U.S. Patent Number 4,280,741), which is relied upon solely for its disclosure of a shaft-wiping lip being provided on a linear bearing assembly.

Claims 12, 14-25, and 27-32 are allowed.

Claims 2-7 and 33 were objected to as depending from a rejected base claim (claim 1), but were otherwise indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter.

Cutting

Cutting discloses a spring-loaded, molded plastic bearing sleeve 10. The sleeve 10 has a pair of spring rings 11, 12 embedded therein, and the sleeve 10 supports a centrally disposed rod 17 at a few discreet points 14. The sleeve fits within an outer housing 16. Cutting does not disclose or suggest elastomeric material disposed between an outer shell and a bearing pad, with a wave spring also disposed between the outer shell and the bearing pad.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the feature recited in dependent claim 2 (and canceled claim 2), which was objected to as depending

from a rejected base claim but was otherwise indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter. In particular, claim 1 (and therefore claims 8-10, which depend from claim 1) now recites an outer shell; a bearing pad; elastomeric material disposed between the outer shell and the bearing pad; and a wave spring disposed between the outer shell and the bearing pad. Because Cutting does not disclose or suggest that combination of features, as evidenced by the Examiner's indication that claim 2 is directed to allowable subject matter, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1 and 8-10 is respectfully requested.

Stoll

Stoll discloses a mechanism for supporting a piston rod within a cylinder head, consisting of a bearing bushing 20 receiving a piston rod 16. The bearing bushing 20 is described as being composed "for example of a sintered material, a plastic material of low sliding friction, bearing bronze or a different suitable bearing material" (col. 2, lines 36-39). The bearing bushing 20 (pad) is supported by "a sleeve 18 of elastic material, for example of rubber. ... arranged between the bearing bushing 20 and the wall of the through opening 12, which sleeve encloses the bearing bushing 20." (col. 2, lines 39-42). Stoll also has wiper lips – the sole feature for which the Examiner relies on Stoll.

However, Stoll does not disclose either the use of a spring, or the use of a spring in combination with an elastomeric material, to maintain a resilient force against the bearing bushing 20.

As noted above, Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the feature recited in dependent claim 2 (and canceled claim 2), which was objected to as depending from a rejected base claim but was otherwise indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter. In particular, claim 1 (and therefore claim 11, which depends from claim 1) now recites an outer shell; a

bearing pad; elastomeric material disposed between the outer shell and the bearing pad; and a wave spring disposed between the outer shell and the bearing pad. Because the combination of Cutting and Stoll does not disclose or suggest that combination of features, as evidenced by the Examiner's indication that claim 2 is directed to allowable subject matter, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 11 is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2-7 and 33 were objected to as depending from a rejected base claim (claim 1) but were otherwise indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter. Because incorporation of the features previously recited in claim 2 into claim 1 should render claim 1 allowable, it follows that claims 3-7 and 33 should be allowable as well without any further amendment. (Claim 2 has been canceled.) Accordingly, claims 3-7 and 33 are unamended.

CONCLUSION

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Office Action with respect to Claims 1 and 8-11 is requested. Applicants submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance, or at least in better form for appeal.

In the event the examiner wishes to discuss any aspect of this response, please contact the attorney at the telephone number identified below.

Respectfully submitted,

By:



Michael A. Shimokaji
Attorney Registration No. 32, 303

Honeywell International, Inc.
Law Dept. AB2
P.O. Box 2245
Morristown, NJ 07962-9806
(310) 512-4886
Attn: Oral Caglar

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Michael A. Shimokaji, Reg. No. 32,303